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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Stephen T. Kuehn

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EXAMINER

ROANE, AARON F

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3739

DATE MAILED: 09/08/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary for Applications Under Accelerated Examination	Application No. 10/034,589	Applicant(s) KUEHN ET AL.	
	Examiner Aaron Roane	Art Unit 3739	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
 Since this application has been granted special status under the accelerated examination program,
**NO extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be permitted and a SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR
 REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE:**

ONE MONTH OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER,
 FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION -- if this is a non-final action or a *Quayle* action.
 (Examiner: For FINAL actions, please use PTOL-326.)

The objective of the accelerated examination program is to complete the examination of an application within twelve months from the filing date of the application. Any reply must be filed electronically via EFS-Web so that the papers will be expeditiously processed and considered. If the reply is not filed electronically via EFS-Web, the final disposition of the application may occur later than twelve months from the filing of the application.

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 June 2006.
 2) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 3) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,5,6 and 8-21 is/are pending in the application.
 3a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 4) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,5,6 and 8-21 is/are rejected.
 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 8) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 9) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 10) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 11) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

Claims 5, 8 and 9 are objected to because of the following informalities:

- Claim 5 depends from claim 4, however claim 4 has been ^{cancelled} _^. Similarly claims 8 and 9 depend on cancelled claim 7. In order to provide an examination the examiner has interpreted claims 5, 8 and 9 to depend directly from claim 1. R 81

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8 and 10-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Garrison et al. (USPN 5,972,030) in view of Campbell et al. (USPN 6,358,240).

Regarding claims 1, 5 and 8, Garrison et al. teach all of the limitations of these claims.

Garrison et al. teach an apparatus that can hold an annuloplasty ring including: a) a holder body (70 and all analogous counterparts in other embodiments) configured to hold an annuloplasty ring, the holder body having a first opening (106 and all analogous counterparts in other embodiments) and a first outer gripping surface (73); b) a handle coupling (80 and all analogous counterparts in other embodiments) slidably mounted to the holder body configured to couple to the tip of a handle, wherein handle coupling includes a second opening (86 and all analogous counterparts in other embodiments) and a second outer gripping surface (outer surface of 80 and all analogous counterparts in other embodiments) opposed to the first outer gripping surface; c) a handle; and d) a release mechanism (various types of interconnection means listed in beginning on col. 18, line 60 and ending on col. 19, line 2) coupled to the handle coupling (82), a non-circular slot or opening, see col. 14-18. Regarding the “opening in the handle coupling being moveable between a lock position where the handle tip engages the opening and an unlock position where the handle tip is released from the opening” Garrison et al. clearly disclose this claimed feature, see col. 18, line 60 through col. 19, line 2. It should be further noted that the handle coupling is slidably mounted to the holder body in various ways (see figures 12A and 12B for example) and that the opening is therefore slidable relative to the holder body. Finally, Garrison et al. fail to disclose the second outer gripping surface that moves between a locked and unlocked position thereby releasing the handle tip from the handle coupling. Campbell et al. disclose a cardiac prosthesis holder device having a handle coupling (2) and teach an alternative locking method of providing

the handle coupling with a opening (opening having an axis A and radius R shown in figure 1) and outer gripping surfaces ("finger tabs" 8) that are used to lock or unlock the handle tip from the handle coupling, see col. 1 and 2 and figures 1-5. Therefore at the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Garrison et al., as taught by Campbell et al., to provide an alternate/equivalent locking method of providing the handle coupling with a opening and outer gripping surfaces in the form of "finger tabs" that are used to lock or unlock the handle tip from the handle coupling.

Regarding claims 2 and 3, Garrison et al. further disclose that the device includes a spring to bias the handle coupling into a lock position, see beginning on col. 18, line 60 and ending on col. 19, line 2. The release mechanism and spring inherently transmit a force to provide a lock or unlocked position.

Regarding claims 6 and 13, Garrison et al. further disclose a protuberance (34) on the tip (26) of the handle (10), see col. 12, lines 18-60 and col. 18 and 19 and figure 1-4.

Regarding claim 10, Garrison et al. further disclose the claimed invention. The surface (the surface of 80) about the opening or slot (82) is raised and provides a gripping surface to which the handle tip (26) grips and/or locks to.

Regarding claim 11, Garrison et al. further disclose many embodiments wherein the handle coupling slides into the holder body in a direction that is parallel to a plane of the holder body, see figures 12A and 12B. A plane of the holder body is so broad that there are infinite number of planes of the holder body that are parallel to the motion or slide direction shown in figures 12A and 12B.

Regarding claim 12, Garrison et al. further disclose a handle (10), see col. 12, lines 18-38 and figures 1, 3 and 4.

Regarding claim 14, Garrison et al. further disclose the release mechanism being a button (44), see col. 12, lines 18-38 and figure 2.

Regarding claims 15 and 16, Garrison et al. further disclose a handle coupling comprising a clip (124) that is slidable within the holder body and provides locking and release capability, see col. 17, lines 30-58 and figure 12A.

Regarding claims 17 and 20, Garrison et al. disclose a handle (10) comprising an elongate shaft (20), a gripping portion (28) that includes ribs (the ribbed or grooved button 30 section with the handle 28) and a tip (26) coupled to the other end of the elongate shaft (with respect to the gripping portion), see col. 12 and figures 1-4. It should be noted that the tip disclosed by Garrison et al. has many walls (flat surfaces), see figure 2.

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Regarding claim 18, Garrison et al. further disclose flat portions various flat sections on 28) on the handle, see figure 1.

Regarding claim 19, Garrison et al. further disclose a tip with walls (flat sides in 36 and 39 are located) that are aligned with some of the flat portions on the handle (the side flat surfaces 90° away from the flat portion with the button therein), see figures 1 and 2.

Claims 9 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Garrison et al. (USPN 5,972,030) in view of Campbell et al. (USPN 6,358,240) as applied to claims 1 above, and further in view of Rhee et al. (USPN 6,019,739).

Regarding claims 9 and 21, Garrison et al. in view of Campbell et al. teach all of the limitations of these claims as described above except for the opening and walls of the tip of the handle being tapered. Additionally Garrison et al. list a large number of equivalent locking/release or interconnection means, see beginning on col. 18, line 60 and ending on col. 19, line 2. Rhee et al. teach a similar device including a body, handle coupling, and handle where the body has a tapered opening for receiving the tapered tip of a handle (figure 1). Therefore, at the time of invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Garrison et al. in view of Campbell et al., as taught by Rhee et al., to include a handle coupling mechanism having a tapered opening and tip with tapered walls as part of a suitable means for coupling the handle to the holder body.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-3, 5,6 and 8-21 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The examiner has provided new prior art in the form of Campbell et al. which teaches the newly claimed subject matter.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Aaron Roane whose telephone number is (571) 272-4771. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 7AM-6PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda Dvorak can be reached on (571) 272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

A.R. *A.R.*
September 5, 2006

Roy D. Gibson
ROY D. GIBSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER